

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4420
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 1000

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, PEPF, GR, US
SUBJECT: FY 79 SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR GREECE

REF: STATE 27406

1. THE OPPOSITION SISTERPAPERS TO VIMA AND TA NEA TODAY (FEBRUARY 2) CARRY ALMOST IDENTICAL LEAD STORIES DATED NEW YORK FROM CORRESPONDENT EFSTATHIADES ON THE APPEARANCE OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY VEST BEFORE THE HAMILTON SUBCOMMITTEE. THEY BOTH REPORT THAT GRANT AID HAS BEEN DISCONTINUED IN THE FY 79 MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM PROPOSED BY THE ADMINISTRATION FOR GREECE AND GO ON TO CLAIM THAT THIS IS DESIGNED TO PUT PRESSURE ON THE GOG TO SIGN THE DCA.

2. ASSISTANT SECRETARY VEST IS QUOTED AS EXPLAINING TO THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON EUROPE AND THE MIDDLE EAST THAT GRANT AID IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE FY 79 PROGRAM PROPOSED FOR GREECE BUT THAT THE QUESTION WOULD BE TAKEN UP WHEN THE US-GREECE DCA IS SIGNED AND BECOMES FINALIZED. CONGRESSMAN HAMILTON IS REPORTED AS ASKING WHETHER THE ABSENCE OF GRANT AID SHOULD BE INTERPRETED AS PRESSURE
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ON THE GOG. VEST, ACCORDING TO THE REPORT, REPLIED HE WOULD NOT USE THE WORD "PRESSURE" AND ADDED THE NON-INCLUSION OF GRANT AID WOULD NOT BE USED AS A MEANS OF ADVANCING THE DEFENSE COOPERATION AGREEMENT.

3. ASIDE FROM TO VIMA AND TA NEA ONLY LEFTIST ELEFTHEROTYPIA PICKS UP THE EFSTATHIADES STORY (WITHOUT ATTRIBUTION). IN AD-

DITION, PRO-GOVERNMENT VRADYNI CARRIES A WASHINGTON STORY (BASED ON AN AP REPORT) ON MILITARY AID LEVELS BUT USES FY 78 FIGURES. WE EXPECT THAT INTEREST IN THE FY 79 SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM WILL INCREASE IN THE DAYS AHEAD AND, IN FACT, WE ARE ALREADY RECEIVING QUERIES ABOUT IT, BASED ON THE EFSTATHIADES STORY. WE ARE LIMITING OUR RESPONSES TO PRESS QUESTIONS TO STATISTICS ON PAST AND CURRENT SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM LEVELS FOR GREECE, DECLINING TO COMMENT ON THE FY 79 PROGRAM.

4. ACTION REQUESTED: WE URGENTLY REQUEST PRESS GUIDANCE ON THE PROPOSED FY 79 SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR GREECE, BOTH WITH RESPECT TO GRANT AID AND THE FMS LEVEL. ASSUME WE CAN IDENTIFY THOSE COUNTRIES SCHEDULED TO RECEIVE GRANT AID. PLEASE CONFIRM.

5. WE WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE RECEIVING BY IMMEDIATE TELEGRAM PERTINENT EXCERPTS ON THE FY 79 SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS FOR GREECE AND TURKEY FROM ASSISTANT SECRETARY VEST'S TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HAMILTON SUBCOMMITTEE, TOGETHER WITH ANY RELEVANT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS DURING THE HEARING. PLEASE TRANSMIT THE VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT OF THE HEARING AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
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